



A system to stun your neighbours

You'll need a big room to accommodate this meaty set-up, but once in place the scale of the sound and picture will amaze you

WHOA! THIS IS a big leap in price from the previous system, but it's also a giant step up in literal and sonic scale – if you have a larger-than-average room or want a knockout all-in-one entertainment centre, this could be the solution.

We've always said that home cinema's biggest thrill comes from the big screen. In the absence of either the cash or the patience for a projector, Pioneer's Award-winning 50in plasma makes a good alternative. It's effectively a higher-resolution version of the equally honoured PDP433HDE used in the system opposite – it can handle wide XGA-quality information (1280 x 768 pixels) compared with the XGA (1024 x 768) ability of its smaller sibling. Sadly, most of the material you feed into the Pioneer won't use this capability, but all the same this is a spectacular display. Black depth is first rate, contrast fine and digital 'noise' – a common plasma flaw – is all but absent. It's also remarkably easy to use, with fine onscreen displays and a good remote.

The Pioneer's picture partner is Cyrus's latest DVD player, the DVD8, linked via a component-video connection. In action, the pair produces bright and colourful pictures, though the Cyrus can't make the most of the Pioneer's awesome abilities because it doesn't support progressive scan – if image is everything to you, an alternative player may be in order. But while the Cyrus can't quite match the

TELEVISION	Pioneer PDP-503HDE	£8000
DVD PLAYER	Cyrus DVD8	£1200
AMPLIFIER	Cyrus AV8	£1100
SPEAKERS	ATC Concept Two	£5500
TOTAL		£15800

“If you want a knockout home entertainment centre to fill a big room and wow your friends, this is it”

visual class leaders, it trounces rivals as an all-in-one sound solution, able to deliver music as well as movies with punch, drive and finesse.

Such qualities are also apparent in its sibling AV8 processor, which by AV standards is a star with music. And it rocks with movies, too – whether you feed it an all-out action movie or something more subtle, it always sounds fast, precise and detailed.

The only drawback is the sheer simplicity of the AV8: there's no six-channel input – so multichannel DVD-Audio and SACD are out – and there's no extended surround-sound support, only Dolby

Setting up this system

SUGGESTED WIRES

Supra AV3 component-video cable	£65
Van den Hul Digital First coaxial-digital cable	£140
Van den Hul D102MkIII interconnects	£80/m
QED Qunex P-SW subwoofer cable	£22

CONNECT IT

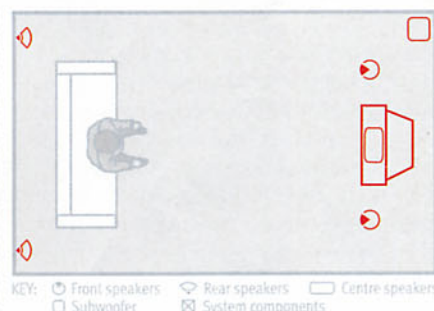
As we've explained before, the ATC SCM10-2 speakers are a little different, in that they fit XLR input connectors to each speaker. You'll need to get phono-to-XLR adapters from your dealer to wire up from the Cyrus AV8's phono preout sockets into each speaker. Don't forget that you'll need long interconnect cables.

TWEAK IT

Remember that each ATC speaker will need its own mains input, so the power amplifiers inside each speaker can be connected appropriately. Note that each speaker can run quite hot (at the back only).

POSITION IT

The centre speaker is so substantial that it needs to be properly supported on an equipment rack, and each main speaker needs a stand, too. Think Partington Dreadnought speaker stands (£100/pr) as a minimum.



Digital and DTS 5.1 plus Pro-Logic II. However, a £300 six-channel upgrade is under development.

Set-up is a doddle thanks to an accompanying microphone that enables the unit to set speaker levels, sizes and delays automatically.

The final part of this system is ATC's fully active Concept Two speaker package. It may not be the smallest speaker kit in the world, but it looks great, and you don't begrudge a centimetre of its size once it springs into room-filling action. We're talking power and control here: each active speaker has 250w, so volume isn't an issue, while the ATCs also have the pace, detail and definition to make the most of the Cyrus pairing's musicality. And as for bass – well, with a 23cm downward-firing driver backed by a 250w amplifier, the ATC subwoofer is never going to lack punch.

This is a mighty system with a mighty sound, as happy playing music as it is movies. Add the excellent plasma and your friends will be amazed.

PLAY THIS ON IT

Spider Man

Colombia Tristar, Cert PG13

Give Spidey a spin and you'll appreciate the big-screen glory of the Pioneer, while the Cyrus combo and ATCs crash out the action. Full-throttle excitement!